

List of all Pending Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A method for permitting access to an electronic system by way of a touchpad, comprising:

- dividing said touchpad into a plurality of regions and assigning a character to each of said regions;
- receiving a sequence of characters that represents the movements of a user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad, said pattern including at least one pause;
- comparing said received sequence of characters with a predetermined sequence of characters; and
- permitting access to an operating mode of said electronic system when said comparing action determines that the received sequence of characters accords with said predetermined sequence of characters.

Claim 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said electronic system is a computing device.

Claim 3-5. (Claims 3-5 are canceled)

Claim 6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said permitting action further comprises allowing access to a protected file.

Claims 7-11. (canceled)

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Claim 12. (Currently amended) An electronic system which enters an operational mode based on inputs from a touchpad, comprising:

- a processor for dividing said touchpad into a plurality of regions and assigning a character to each of said regions;

- a signal conditioner for receiving a sequence of characters that represents the movements of a user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad, said pattern including at least one pause;

- a processor for comparing said received sequence of characters with a predetermined sequence of characters; and

- an access control circuit which permits the use of said operational mode based on the results of said comparing action.

Claims 13-29. (canceled)

Claim 30. (currently amended) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said machine to perform method steps for directing a portable computer to enter an operational mode, said method comprising:

- dividing said touchpad into a plurality of regions and assigning a character to each of said regions;

- receiving a sequence of characters that represents the movements of a user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad,

- comparing said received sequence of characters with a predetermined sequence of characters associated with movements of said user's finger tracing said pattern on said touchpad; and

- permitting access to an operating mode of said computing device when said comparing action determines that said received sequence of characters representing movements of said user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad accords with said predetermined sequence of characters associated with movements of said user's finger tracing said pattern on said touchpad, said pattern including at least one pause.

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Claim 31. (Original) The method of claim 30 wherein said permitting action further comprises allowing a user to access a protected file.

Claims 32-33 (canceled)